



LA SCUOLA D'ITALIA  
GUGLIELMO MARCONI

## Preliminary Assessment Policy

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## Preliminary Assessment Policy

### **Assessment Philosophy**

La Scuola d'Italia academic program – intrinsically grounded in the tenets that define both the Italian and American educational systems for students from 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade – is international in nature and fundamentally inspired by the core principles of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO).

In line with IBO prescriptions, both formative and summative assessments represent a key staple in the assessment philosophy of La Scuola. Assessments inform our teaching practices and provide students with periodic opportunities for reflection on their progress toward effective learning.

Teachers use the information derived from the assessment of students' performance not only to evaluate the level of students' knowledge, but also to tailor teaching methodologies to the specific needs of the class and the individual learner. Hence, assessing students regularly provides teachers with an indispensable tool to correct the course of instruction in a timely and effective manner.

Students also benefit from being assessed in a regular and varied fashion, as the periodicity of assessments helps them develop key organizational skills. In addition to this, different test modalities – both formative and summative, oral and written – naturally strengthen students' ability to adapt to changing circumstances and demands, while giving different types of learners equal opportunities to excel.

### **Purposes, Types of Assessment and Relative Communications**

At La Scuola, we believe that teachers are facilitators of students' learning. Teachers create the outline and set up the goals for a curriculum that students complete, acquiring skills, knowledge and deep understanding in the process. Assessment is one of the major tools in the accomplishment of this wider goal of learning. It is intended not only as a pure measurement of achievement but also as a useful instrument of support in the acquisition of knowledge itself.

Indeed, both formative and summative assessments are essential components of the learning process, providing feedback to students and teachers about students' strengths and weaknesses, and helping to develop their skills and capabilities.



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Our assessment practice is intended to measure the acquisition of factual information and of higher-order cognitive skills. These skills are the ability to analyze, order, synthesize and evaluate information, with the final goal of creatively and critically building knowledge. Moreover, assessments can significantly promote a positive attitude toward learning by teaching students *how* to learn and how to approach information.

The circular feedback process occurring between teachers and students after each evaluation is of fundamental importance in this respect. Parents are informed about specific assessment results and the general trend in the academic performance of their child at regular time intervals, during scheduled parent-teacher conferences (twice per year), through mid-term progress report cards in November and in April, progress report cards at the end of each semester and during any additional informal and formal meeting warranted by the circumstances of the case at hand.

Types of formative assessments used at La Scuola across different disciplines include (but are not limited to): class discussions, class-wide interactive problem-solving sessions and activities, drills, quizzes, critical summaries and other written assignments, review of homework, in-class reading, etc. Formative assessments typically occur on a daily basis.

Summative assessments help determine students' level of achievement in a given discipline. This type of assessment consists mainly of lengthier written tests and viva voce orals. Summative assessments are generally carried out once per month.

Students' advancement in school is primarily based on assessment results averaged over the entire school year. A minimum grade of 6-Italian / 3 – IB/ C-American (for grade descriptors and grades conversion details, see the following section of this document) is required in every subject for a student to be able to advance to the next grade.

In addition to the kinds of periodic assessments described above, the parity status granted to La Scuola by the Italian Ministry of Education requires 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to take an end-of-the-year exam in June. The exam consists of four written tests (in Italian, English, French and Mathematics, respectively) as well as a “Tesina Project”, a written paper followed by an oral presentation exploring the connections existing between (at least) three of the subjects studied during the year. The presentation of the “Tesina Project” takes place before a panel of teachers chaired by an external Italian educator overseeing the entire examination proceedings on behalf of the Italian Ministry of Education.



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Similarly, the Italian Ministry of Education requires students in 12<sup>th</sup> grade to take an even more rigorous final exam, the “Esame di Stato”. The exam occurs at the end of June and is necessary for students to be able to earn their Italian School Diploma of “Liceo Scientifico”. The Esame di Stato – comprising both written and viva voce oral evaluations – is administered by a panel of six (three internal and three external) teachers and, in analogy with the end-of-the-year exam in 8<sup>th</sup> grade - is chaired by an external Italian educator overseeing the entire examination proceedings on behalf of the Italian Ministry of Education. The three external Italian teachers come from around the world and are also appointed by the Italian Ministry of Education.

### **IB Grades, Italian Grades, American Grades and Grade Conversions**

Grading is an inherent component of assessing.

IB grades are awarded on a 7-point scale, with 4 being the passing grade.

Italian grades awarded on a 10-point scale, with 6 being the passing grade.

American grades are awarded in a variety of ways, but typically on an A-F alphabetical scale, with C being the passing grade.

La Scuola has fully adopted IB recommendations with respect to general grade descriptors and converts IB grades into the corresponding Italian grades in accordance to the following table:

<b>Italian Grade</b>	<b>IB Grade</b>	<b>Grade Descriptor</b>
10	7	The student demonstrates excellent content knowledge and understanding, conceptual and contextual awareness and critical, reflective thinking. Highly effective research, investigation and technical skills are evident, as is the ability to analyse, evaluate and synthesize qualitative and quantitative evidence, knowledge and concepts to reach valid conclusions or solve problems. In collaborative exercises, the student works very well with others, ethically and responsibly, and with perseverance. Responses are highly insightful, accurate, clear, concise, convincing, logically structured, with sufficient detail, precise use of appropriate terminology and with appropriate attention to purpose and audience. Responses are creative, make very effective use of well-selected examples, demonstrate awareness of alternative points of view and provide clear evidence of intercultural understanding.
9	6	The student demonstrates very good content knowledge and understanding, conceptual and contextual awareness and critical, reflective thinking. Competent research, investigation and technical skills are evident, as is the ability to analyse, evaluate and synthesize evidence, knowledge and concepts. In collaborative exercises, the student works well with others, ethically and responsibly, and with perseverance. Responses are mainly accurate, clear, concise, convincing, logically structured, with sufficient detail, using consistent terminology and with appropriate attention to purpose and audience. Responses show creativity, make effective use of examples, demonstrate awareness of alternative points of view and provide evidence of intercultural understanding.



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Italian Grade	IB Grade	Grade Descriptor
8	5	The student demonstrates sound content knowledge and understanding, good conceptual and contextual awareness and evidence of critical, reflective thinking. Research, investigation and technical skills are evident and sometimes well developed. Analytical ability is evident, although responses may at times be more descriptive than evaluative. In collaborative investigations, the student generally works well with others, ethically and responsibly, and with perseverance. Responses are generally accurate, clear, logically structured and coherent, with mainly relevant material, using suitable terminology, and are sometimes well developed. Responses show reasonable creativity, use of examples, awareness of audience and evidence of intercultural understanding.
7	4	The student demonstrates, with some gaps, secure content knowledge and understanding, some conceptual and contextual awareness and some evidence of critical thinking. Research, investigation and technical skills are evident, but not thoroughly developed. Analysis is generally valid, but more descriptive than evaluative. The student solves basic or routine problems, but with limited ability to deal with new or difficult situations. In collaborative exercises, the student works within a team and generally approaches investigations ethically and responsibly, but requires supervision. Responses are mostly accurate and clear with little irrelevant material. There is some ability to logically structure responses with adequate coherence and use of appropriate terminology. Responses sometimes show creativity, and include some awareness of audience and evidence of intercultural understanding.
6	3	The student demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of the content, with limited evidence of conceptual and contextual awareness. Research and/or investigation is evident, but remains undeveloped. There is some ability to comprehend and solve problems. Collaborative investigations are approached ethically and responsibly, but require close supervision. Responses are only sometimes valid and appropriately detailed. There is some expression of ideas and organization of work and basic use of appropriate terminology, but arguments are rarely convincing. Responses lack clarity and some material is repeated or irrelevant. There is limited creativity, awareness of context or audience and limited evidence of intercultural understanding.
5	2	The student demonstrates little knowledge or understanding of the content, with weak comprehension of concepts and context and little evidence of application. Evidence of research and/or investigation is only superficial. There is little ability to comprehend and solve problems. Responses are rarely accurate or valid. There is some attempt to express ideas, use terminology appropriate to the subject and organize work, but the response is rarely convincing. There is very little creativity, awareness of context or audience and little evidence of intercultural understanding.
4 (and below)	1	The student demonstrates very rudimentary knowledge or understanding of the content, with very weak comprehension of concepts and context. Ability to comprehend and solve problems or to express ideas is not evident. Responses are rarely accurate or valid. Organization is lacking to the point that responses are confusing. Responses demonstrate very little to no appreciation of context or audience, inappropriate or inadequate use of terminology, and little to no intercultural understanding.



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Grade conversion between the Italian and American systems is then realized by using the Fulbright recommended conversion guidelines described in the table below:

Italian Voto (Grade on 10-pt scale)	Suggested US Letter Equivalency (Grades A-F)	Suggested US GPA Equivalency (4.00 scale)	Qualitative Assessment
10	A++/ Honors	4.50	Outstanding (extremely rarely awarded)
9	A+	4.30	Superior (rarely awarded)
8	A	4.00	Very Good (considered a top mark)
7	B	3.00-3.99	Good
6	C	2.00-2.99	Satisfactory/ Average
5	D-F	1.00-1.99	Unsatisfactory/ Remedial lessons & exam required
4	F	0.50-0.99	Poor/ Failure/ Remedial lessons & exam required
1-3	F	0-0.49	Severe academic failure & lack of effort

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### Assessment Policy Steering Committee

1. Marta Baldassarri, Technology teacher in the Middle School (Media),  
Mathematics and Physics teacher in the Upper School (Liceo)
2. Laure Benchimol, French teacher in the Middle and Upper School (Media and Liceo)  
Daniela Castelli, Italian teacher in the Upper School (Liceo)
3. Mary Giaimo, English teacher in the Middle School (Media)

### References

1. IBO Official Diploma Programme assessment, Principles and practice
2. IBO Official Grade Descriptors
3. Fulbright Recommended Guidelines for US-Italy Grade Conversion
4. La Scuola d'Italia NYSAIS Self-Study